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TO RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 0000
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFSS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS STATE 042235

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KTIA MARR MOPS PM PREL US

SUBJECT: AGREEMENT WITH PANAMA ON STATUS OF FORCES FOR A MEDICAL READINESS TRAINING EXERCISE FROM MAY 8 - 24, 2009

REF: STATE 049307 (2006)

¶1. THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST. SEE PARAGRAPHS 2, 5, & 6.

¶2. DOD HAS ASKED THE DEPARTMENT TO SECURE STATUS PROTECTIONS FOR U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO WILL BE PRESENT IN PANAMA, FROM MAY 8 - 24, 2009, IN CONJUNCTION WITH A MEDICAL READINESS TRAINING EXERCISE. POST IS REQUESTED TO IMMEDIATELY PROPOSE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA AN EXCHANGE OF DIPLOMATIC NOTES FOR THIS PURPOSE, USING THE TEXT AT PARAGRAPH 3. TO AVOID THE EXCHANGE OF MULTIPLE NOTES, POST SHOULD PRESENT THE BELOW NOTE IN A DRAFT FORMAT AND SEND A FINAL NOTE ONLY AFTER REACHING AGREEMENT ON THE TEXT.
(COMMENT: WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE ACTIVITY, THE TEXT IS SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR TO THAT IN REFTEL.)

¶3. BEGIN TEXT OF DRAFT NOTE: (COMPLIMENTARY OPENING) AND HAS THE HONOR TO REFER TO RECENT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS REGARDING THE STATUS OF UNITED STATES PERSONNEL, AS DEFINED IN THE EMBASSY'S NOTE NO. 834, DATED JULY 3, 2001, AND THE MINISTRY'S NOTE DM NO. 0301/2001, DATED JULY 10, 2001, WHO MAY BE TEMPORARILY PRESENT IN PANAMA IN CONNECTION WITH A MEDICAL READINESS TRAINING EXERCISE FROM MAY 8 - 24, 2009. UNITED STATES PERSONNEL PARTICIPATING IN THIS EXERCISE WILL TOTAL APPROXIMATELY TEN (10), WHO WILL BE IN UNIFORM AS AUTHORIZED. THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT IS TO CONDUCT MEDICAL READINESS TRAINING. The Panamanian counterpart is Dr. ISMAEL VERGARAS, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, MINISTRY OF HEALTH, PANAMA WEST. THE EXERCISE WILL TAKE PLACE IN NICOLAS SOLANO REGIONAL HOSPITAL, REPUBLIC OF PANAMA.

AS A RESULT OF THESE DISCUSSIONS, THE EMBASSY PROPOSES THAT SUCH PERSONNEL SHALL BE ACCORDED A STATUS EQUIVALENT TO THAT ACCORDED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL STAFF OF THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA UNDER THE VIENNA CONVENTION ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS OF APRIL 18, 1961 (VIENNA CONVENTION). THE UNDERSTANDINGS CONTAINED IN THE EMBASSY'S NOTE NO. 835 DATED JULY 3, 2001 AND THE MINISTRY'S REPLY IN NOTE NO. D.M. 0300/2001 DATED JULY 10, 2001, SHALL APPLY.

UNITED STATES PERSONNEL SHALL BE PERMITTED TO ENTER AND EXIT PANAMA WITH UNITED STATES IDENTIFICATION AND WITH COLLECTIVE MOVEMENT OR INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL ORDERS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH AN AGREEMENT ON NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND PANAMA, WHICH HAS BEEN IN FORCE SINCE JUNE 1, 1956, AS AMENDED, EXCEPT THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA SHALL WAIVE THE REQUIREMENT FOR TOURIST CARDS AND RELATED FEES. PANAMANIAN AUTHORITIES SHALL ACCEPT AS VALID DRIVING LICENSES OR PERMITS ISSUED BY THE APPROPRIATE U.S. AUTHORITIES TO UNITED STATES PERSONNEL FOR OPERATION OF VEHICLES; AND SUCH PERSONNEL SHALL BE AUTHORIZED TO WEAR U.S. GOVERNMENT ATTIRE (UNIFORMS) AND TO CARRY AUTHORIZED EQUIPMENT WHEN REQUIRED FOR THEIR MISSION WHILE PERFORMING OFFICIAL DUTIES.

THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES FURTHER PROPOSES THAT THE

GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA ACCORD DUTY-FREE IMPORTATION AND EXPORTATION, AS WELL AS EXEMPTION FROM INSPECTION AND TAXATION OF PRODUCTS, PROPERTY, MATERIEL, AND EQUIPMENT IMPORTED INTO, ACQUIRED IN, OR EXPORTED FROM PANAMA BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OR ITS PERSONNEL IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR MISSION IN PANAMA, EXCEPT THAT UNITED STATES PERSONNEL SHALL NOT BE EXEMPT FROM PANAMANIAN TAXES ON ITEMS PURCHASED IN PANAMA FOR THEIR PERSONAL USE.

THE TWO GOVERNMENTS SHALL COOPERATE IN TAKING THE NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE THE SECURITY OF UNITED STATES PERSONNEL AND PROPERTY IN PANAMA.

VESSELS AND AIRCRAFT OWNED OR OPERATED BY OR FOR UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES SHALL NOT BE SUBJECT TO PAYMENT OF LANDING OR PORT FEES, PILOTAGE CHARGES, NAVIGATION, OVERFLIGHT OR PARKING CHARGES OR LIGHTERAGE OR HARBOR DUES WHILE IN PANAMA, EXCEPT FOR THE CHARGES RELATED TO THE NORMAL TRANSIT OF THE PANAMA CANAL, PREVIOUSLY AGREED TO; THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES SHALL PAY REASONABLE CHARGES FOR SERVICES REQUESTED AND RECEIVED.

IT SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF UNITED STATES PERSONNEL TO RESPECT THE LAWS OF PANAMA AND TO ABSTAIN FROM ANY ACTIVITY INCONSISTENT WITH THE SPIRIT OF THEIR MISSION. AUTHORITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA SHALL TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO THAT END.

APPROPRIATE PANAMANIAN AND U.S. MILITARY OR CIVILIAN POLICE AUTHORITIES SHALL COOPERATE IN THE INVESTIGATION OF ANY CRIME BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN COMMITTED BY OR AGAINST UNITED STATES PERSONNEL.

THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA SHALL ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR, AND SHALL HOLD THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HARMLESS FROM, ANY AND ALL CLAIMS ARISING FROM THE USE OF PROJECTS CONSTRUCTED, OR IN THE PROCESS OF BEING CONSTRUCTED IN WHOLE OR IN PART, BY UNITED STATES PERSONNEL IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR MISSION IN PANAMA.

FINALLY, BOTH GOVERNMENTS SHALL WAIVE ANY AND ALL CLAIMS (OTHER THAN CONTRACTUAL CLAIMS) AGAINST EACH OTHER FOR PERSONAL INJURY TO OR DEATH OF THEIR MILITARY OR CIVILIAN PERSONNEL, OR FOR DAMAGE, LOSS, OR DESTRUCTION OF THE OTHER'S PROPERTY ARISING OUT OF ACTIVITIES COVERED BY THIS AGREEMENT. THE UNITED STATES SHALL PAY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH UNITED STATES LAW, FAIR AND REASONABLE COMPENSATION IN SETTLEMENT OF MERITORIOUS CLAIMS BY THIRD PARTIES ARISING OUT OF ACTS OR OMISSIONS OF UNITED STATES PERSONNEL, OR WHICH ARE OTHERWISE INCIDENT TO AGREED ACTIVITIES BY UNITED STATES PERSONNEL IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR MISSION IN PANAMA.

ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY MAY BE ENTERED INTO BY THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS.

THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA PROPOSES THAT THIS NOTE AND THE MINISTRY,S REPLY THERETO SHALL CONSTITUTE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT AND THAT ITS PROVISIONS SHALL BE ENTER INTO FORCE AS OF THE DATE OF THE MINISTRY,S REPLY. (COMPLIMENTARY CLOSING.) END TEXT.

14. (U) THE SUGGESTED REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA SHOULD READ AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN TEXT: (COMPLIMENTARY OPENING) AND REFERS TO THE EMBASSY,S NOTE (NUMBER AND DATE) WHICH READS AS FOLLOWS:

(QUOTE U.S. NOTE IN ITS ENTIRETY).

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS HAS THE FURTHER HONOR TO INFORM THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA THAT THE PROPOSALS SET FORTH IN THE EMBASSY,S NOTE ARE ACCEPTABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA AND TO CONFIRM THAT THE EMBASSY,S NOTE AND THIS NOTE SHALL CONSTITUTE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS, WHICH SHALL ENTER INTO FORCE ON THIS DATE. END TEXT.

15. (U) ANY HOST COUNTRY PROPOSAL FOR CHANGES TO THE U.S. TEXT SHOULD BE REFERRED TO THE DEPARTMENT. STATE POCS ARE

MARSHA SINGER, WHA/CEN, 202-647-3505, OR CDR TOM HEROLD,
L/PM, 202-647-7563. THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE POCS ARE DAVID
CLOE, 703-697-3628, AND WALTER EARLE, OSD/WHA, 703-697-3327.

¶16. (U) UPON CONCLUSION OF THE EXCHANGE OF NOTES, EMBASSY
SHOULD REPORT THE AGREEMENT BY CABLE, AND SEND THE ORIGINAL
HOST COUNTRY NOTE WITH A CERTIFIED COPY OF THE U.S. NOTE TO
THE DEPARTMENT, L/T, ROOM 5420 (ATTN:DAPHNE COOK).
CLINTON